

II. PARK PURPOSES

MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE STATE PARKS SYSTEM

The North Carolina state parks system exists for the enjoyment, education, health, and inspiration of all our citizens and visitors. The mission of the state parks system is to conserve and protect representative examples of the natural beauty, ecological features, and recreation resources of statewide significance; to provide outdoor recreation opportunities in a safe and healthy environment; and to provide education opportunities that promote stewardship of the state's natural heritage.

ENO RIVER STATE PARK PURPOSE STATEMENT

Efforts to establish a state park along the Eno River began in 1965 in response to the city of Durham's proposal to build a reservoir in the river valley. A group of concerned citizens led a campaign to save the Eno and formed the Association for the Preservation of the Eno River Valley. The Association proposed establishment of a state park, and in May of 1972, the State Board of Conservation and Development approved the idea. Durham subsequently dropped its efforts to construct the reservoir, and in August of 1973, the first land for the park was acquired with assistance from the Association and The Nature Conservancy. Much of the park is now a Dedicated Nature Preserve.

With its abundance of pools, riffles, and rocky bars, the river itself is the most significant biological feature in the Eno River State Park. Along with the diversity of aquatic habitats, the relatively undisturbed vegetated corridor provides excellent protection for the water quality of the Eno River. As a result of these unique features, a number of rare animals are found within the park, including the Atlantic pigtoe (*Fusconia masoni*), Neuse River waterdog (*Necturus lewisi*), and Roanoke bass (*Ambloplites cavifrons*).

Numerous heath bluffs occur along the Eno River and are particularly unusual because of the dominance of Catawba rhododendron (*Rhododendron catawbiense*), which is typically found at high elevations in the mountains. At least one regionally rare species, the redback salamander, (*Plethodon cinereus*) is associated with these heath bluffs. The park also contains fairly extensive tracts of hardwood forests typical of those that once covered most of the Piedmont. A wide variety of upland wildlife species inhabit these forests. Unfortunately, large blocks of hardwood forest are very uncommon in this part of the state and are becoming increasingly rare. The forests and other habitat areas within the park are connected to other protected lands, including the Camp Butner and Falls of the Neuse Game Lands, by the unbroken Eno River corridor.

Eno River State Park is an important recreational resource. The linear park offers easy access, particularly for visitors from increasingly urban areas nearby. The park's many and varied recreational opportunities include hiking, canoeing, backpacking, picnicking, and fishing. The river and park lands contain resources ideal for environmental education activities and interpretation of the area's rich cultural heritage.

The park preserves and protects the varied scenic resources of the narrow and steep-walled river valley. Outstanding scenic views include river bluffs, whitewater rapids, quiet meanders, rock outcroppings, rolling landscapes, historic mill sites, wildflowers, flowering shrubs, and woodlands dominated by pine, cedar, maple, dogwood, oak, and hickory.

The Eno River valley is rich in cultural resources. The Eno River and surrounding lands were home to widespread American Indian civilizations. A Siouan tribe named Eno and the Shakori tribe shared this river valley in harmony. These tribes eventually merged into one nation at the end of the seventeenth century and settled near the present location of Durham. The Occoneechee tribe lived along the river in the late 1600' s and early 1700' s. The Eno River has also been an important part of commerce for European Americans since the 1750' s when settlers began moving to the area from northern states. There are a number of old mill sites along the river, of which Synnott's Mill is the oldest. The most outstanding mill is the John Cabe Mill, built in 1779. In addition, William Few's Mill (c.1758), Holden Mill (c.1820), Berry Public Mill (c.1850), and Berry Private Mill (c.1854), among others, are located along the river. As would be expected, old homesites and cemeteries are found throughout the Eno River Valley.

Within this part of the Piedmont, the narrow, steep-walled Eno River Valley has frequent outcroppings and numerous rapids and is a unique feature on the landscape. These geological features result from the predominance of metamorphosed volcanic rock that is more resistant to erosion than other types of rock in the area. Since there is no evidence of ancient volcanic vents, the metamorphosed volcanic rock within the Eno River State Park may have erupted from faulted areas known as fissures that were active periodically for millions of years.

Eno River state Park exists so that its valuable biological, recreational, scenic, archaeological, and geological resources will be protected. The Division of Parks and Recreation is charged with preserving these values and providing experiences that promote pride in and understanding of this treasured natural heritage.